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ABSTRACT

That women hold less than 3 percent of secondary school principalships underscores society's contuinuing use of sexual stereotypes. Among the misguided assumptions hindering women's professional aspirations are beliefs about their lack of interest in promotions and their ineffectiveness as authority models. There is also the behavioral description: e.g., a female administrator is picky, whereas her male counterpart is good on details. If schools are not to lose a valuable pool of administrative talent, clear change strategies and implementation commitments must be realized. The federal government must enforce discrimination regulations and promote goals for increasing women's numbers in administration. State education boards should support affirmative action plans, and state education departments promote more women to top positions as role models for other women. On a local level, persons should work for the development of an objective administrator selection process--one now marred by the "good old boy network." Professional groups should turn their efforts toward providing women with a climate conducive to fulfilling aspirations. Colleges of education, too, should recruit women to administration faculties and deanships. Finally, women themselves must be in the forefront of the equity struggle. Among a list of advancement suggestions are: making certain one has necessary administrator credentials, showing interest and enthusiasm in volunteering, and letting one's principal know of one's interest in administration. (KS)

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WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION

Colbert Whitaker

William Hales

Paper presented at the 68th Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, February 3-7, 1984, Las Vegas, Nevada.

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I. WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION- INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF BACKGROUND

Over the past decade women have made rapid career gains in law, medicine, engineering, space science, business and industry; but unfortunately gains in education have not kept pace. Currently 83 percent of all ememtentary and 47 percent of all secondary teachers are women, yet they serve as principals in only 18 percent of the elementary schools and less than 3 percent of the secondary schools. With respect to the superintendency, less than 1 percent of these positions is held by women. Overwhelmingly, schools and school systems are staffed by women but administered by men. This, however, has not always been the case. During the first quarter of this century, elementary educational administration was regarded as predominantly a female position. In 1928, for example, 85 percent of all elementary school teachers were females; but unlike today, 55 percent of the elementary schools were headed by women. This represents a decline of 37 percent.

Males began entering teaching and administration positions in increasing numbers during the 1930's as the Great Depression deepened. Their numbers were further accelerated by post World War II events as veterans, funded by the G. I. Bill, were rapidly acquiring administrative credentials. They quickly climbed the organizational hierarchy, assuming leadership positions formerly held by women.

The percentage of males in administration continued to increase in the 1950's and 1960's with an expanding economy and the "baby boom". Prevailing attitudes during the period typically acted against the interests of career-minded women by portraying the ideal women as a housewife and mother. It was not considered "feminine" to compete with men, particularly for administrative positions.

Beginning in the 1970's the "women's movement", a declining birthrate, an inflationary economy, and the lack of a career ladder in K-12 education compelled many highly competent women to seek the better paying jobs in administrative positions or to leave education all together. The climate was beginning to change as a new demand was being experienced by women who wanted career development, as well as a

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family. They were met, however, with a multiplicity of societal barriers and sterotypes. The frustration and new confidence of many upwardly mobile career-minded women was best expressed by Judy Woodruff, a Washington Correspondent for "The NacNeil-Lehrer News Hour", when she stated in an address to the Women in Communication's 1983 National Professional Conference in Philadelphia, that "Women who seek to be equal with men simply lack ambition".

For the female interested in a non-traditional professional career, growing up in America is not an easy task (traditional being secretary, teacher or nurse). Women are frequently confronted with role expectations which conflict, such as wife, mother and career person. The female career role continues to be viewed by many, as a secondary role, a role to be assumed only if and when family responsibilities require or permit it. This attitude frequently imposes a devastating sense of guilt when women are preceived as devoting too much time to their occupation and not enough time to their families. Men, on the other hand, who exhibit similiar behavior are viewed as dedicated, upwardly mobile, company men and are usually viewed as "good providers". It is a sad commentary that in our society as the wife's income rises, there is a corresponding increase in the number of divorces and separations. Conventional wisdom attributes this to the husband's disdain for competition or to the preception that the wife's career is interfering with more important commitments to home life. A sizable minority of professional women avoid the dual role conflict be remaining single or seeking employment where the conflict will not occur. Gender thus becomes the determiner of whether behavior is viewed positively or negatively and, therefore, encouraged or discouraged. Attitudes and sterotypes such as these and women's acceptance of them, have traditionally forced women into jobs which are viewed as mere income supplements to the "major bread-winner", the husband. These jobs typically have not required extensive educational preparation or ego involvement. This perceptual climate, coupled with the belief that those who appoint administrators have not seriously considered female applicants, may help to explain why such a small percentage of women teachers have historically

pursued a graduate major in administration and supervision. It is also interesting to compare the changing aspirations and expectations of success on the part of women from the 1950's to the present. In 1958, for example, among beginning teachers surveyed, only nine percent of the women teachers expressed interest in pursuing administrative careers. In a more recent survey, that same question was posed and approximately 50 percent of the women surveyed expressed interest in becoming school administrators.

The sex role of femininity in our society also places a heavy burden on women to develop "socially desirable" behavior traits such as gentility, submissiveness, delicacy, dependence, impeccable etiquette and high moral standards. Males are, on the other hand, encouraged to be aggressive, athletic, extrovertive, sexually promiscuous, career conscious and sophisticated. Women administrators usually describe themselves as competent, extrovertive and highly skilled. Rarely does a woman administrator say she is athletic or aggressive. Yet, in order to survive and compete in the administrative world, a woman is expected to exhibit certain "male" qualities, while at the same time balancing her sex role as a woman. Successful professional women are often rejected by other women because they exhibit the "male" attitudes and qualities described. They may also be rejected by men who feel threatened by them, or even accepted by some who view them as successful. These accepting men, however, tend to see successful professional women as "one of the buys". Common remarks might include: "You're different from most women"; "You think like a man". Indeed, professional women are different, especially women administrators who daily manipulate power, resources, and people. Women, however successful, don't wish to be viewed as men. Somehow an equilibrium must be established which permits feminine behavior patterns while performing administrative functions. The failure to accomplish this could lead to sex role imbalance, negative self-image and self-rejection which could in turn lead to frustration, withdrawal or overt aggression.

In our society, it would seem then that there is a double standard for success. One for males and one for females and the one for females is far more complex and conflict-producing than the one for males. Further examples of this can be seen in the following societal hurdles for the aspiring female: These hurdles are in fact largely erroneous assumptions, attitudes and beliefs held by both women and men as social givens and as such rarely questioned. The truly tragic consequences of these assumptions is that behavior is predicated on them. Some of these assumptions are that:

1. Women are not really interested in promotions.
2. Women are not as intellectual or analytical as men.
3. Women are not effective disciplinarians.
4. Women are not competitive and assertive.
5. Women are too emotional. They cannot be rational, well-organized or objective.
6. Women make poor administrators because they are ineffective as authority models.

Some wag, in a tongue-in-cheek comparison, offered to differentiate male and female administrators by categorizing certain behaviors exhibited by both, but described differently. The following will best illustrate the dilemma:

HOW TO TELL A MALE ADMINISTRATOR FROM A FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR

A male administrator is dynamic	A female administrator is aggressive
A male administrator is firm	A female administrator is inflexible
He is good on details	She is picky
He loses his temper	She is bitchy
He is a go-getter	She is pushy
When he is depressed, everyone tiptoes past his office	When she's moody, it must be her time of the month
He follows through	She doesn't know when to quit
He's confident	She's stuck up

He has dreams	She has delusions of grandeur
He has the courage of his convictions	She's stubborn
He is a man of the world	She's been around
He can hold his liquor	She's a lush
He isn't afraid to say what he thinks	She's mouthy
He's human	She's emotional
He exercises authroity diligently	She's power mad
He is closed mouthed	She is secretive
He can make decisions quickly	She is impulsive
He's a stern taskmaster	She's hard to work for
He is experienced	She has been through the mill

If this country and its institutions are to reach their full potential, it is essential that perceptions such as these and the behaviors predicated on them be rejected as unfounded and counter-productive. We must go beyond evaluations of individuals based on gender.

Another misconception which hinders the female in seeking administrative positions is the idea that neither women nor men will willingly work for female managers. Those who express this argument state that other women are jealous and the men are demeaned by reporting to women administrators whom they view as not being competent. Research, however, strongly indicates that both males and females who have worked in a subordinate position for a woman administrator have found the experience to be a positive one.

Still another stumbling block that women must face upon entering the field of administration is the sense of awkwardness felt by some men when functioning in social situations with women. If a male administrator believes that a woman will upset the other males on the management team because of the presumed necessity to make accommodations, the path of least resistance is not to employ her initially, or to keep her isolated in order to protect her from such awkward situations. By

isolating the female from the "old boy" network and informal contacts with other managers who happen to be males, the female remains out of the mainstream and is thus denied valuable insights, an awareness of conflict areas, informal communication with "the boys", and even an awareness of promotion opportunities. These subtle actions, and some which are not so subtle, are designed to be protective of the female and to assure the continuity of the "old boys". However, such practices may be more damaging in the long run than overt acts of discrimination. Most women who are currently in administration have had male mentors: male colleagues who provided opportunities, assistance and suggestions normally reserved for male proteges. Female role models are important but there is no valid reason why males should not be active in identifying potential administrators, male and female.

One broad area of sensitivity which is frequently viewed by men in a casual way yet can be very significant in terms of understanding how women feel and react is the tendency on the part of some men to refer to all women as "girls" or "good old gals". Forty-year-old teachers and secretaries should not be termed girls. The use of such terminology is demeaning and connotes an image of immature, helpless creatures who should not be taken seriously. Language usage usually reflects prevailing attitudes.

Given all the problems enumerated above and all of those not discussed, what strategies might be developed to enhance opportunities for women to enter the previously closed world of educational administration; and once in an administrative position, what can be done to greater assure success? My colleague, Dr. William Hales, will be concerned with this postion of our presentation.

II. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

My colleague has presented historical and background information outlining the origin, nature and extent of the problems confronting able and talented women who have the audacity to challenge the fraternal order of "Good Old Boys". It is clear from the evidence presented that, like the British Club, the secondary principalship remains one of the last bastions of male privilege in a changing society.

It is also clear that there is no objective evidence to justify these discriminatory attitudes and practices. It is simply not true that women are generally less effective than men in administrative positions nor that they are physically or emotionally incapable of performing the duties required of secondary principals. These beliefs should be discarded with other antiquated myths.

After reviewing the sterotypic assumptions relating to women administrators, it is interesting to examine the research which compares women and men administrators. These studies note, for example, that females are appointed as administrators later in their careers than men, that women usually have more classroom experience prior to entering administration, are more likely than men to have been viewed as outstanding teachers, have more years of schooling and, are viewed by their faculties as being at least as competent as men and finally are more likely to be single, or if married, to have adult children.

American schools today face urgent and critical problems. It is essential that the most promising and talented individuals be recruited and trained to provide educational leadership capable of dealing with the the serious problems of today and the emerging problems of tomorrow. It is unsound and self-defeating to exclude women, who comprise more than two-thirds of the teaching force, from the potential pool of administrative candidates. American education can no longer afford to lose the leadership potential of the many able women who have been systematically excluded from the secondary principalship in the past. Women in the future must be admitted to our profession, not solely because of government pressure or fear of the National

Organization for Women, but because it is right and just and because our nation's schools desperately need the best leaders available. The issue, then, is not "Should we appoint women to secondary school principalships?", but rather how should we proceed to change the attitudes and practices that have largely excluded women from such positions in the past. What we need is a strategy for change which is forthright, clear and unambiguous together with the strong commitment or organizations such as this one to support and implement such change. We males who have diligently guarded the entrance must now move over and make room for our female colleagues. What then should be our strategy for change?

In developing a strategy for change that will increase the opportunities for women in secondary school administration, six levels of responsibility must be actively involved. These levels of responsibility are the following:

A. Federal Government (including the U.S. Department of Education);

B. State Governments (including State Boards and Departments of Education);

C. Local school boards and school district administrations;

D. Professional associations and groups (particularly Principals' Associations);

E. Colleges and universities (particularly schools of education and departments of educational administration);

F. Women in education (individually and collectively).

When discussing the "responsibilities" to be assigned to each level of educational governance and influence, the following necessary functions or processes will be addressed:

A. Goal setting;

B. Research activities;

C. Identification and recruitment activities;

D. Education and training activities;

E. The selection and promotion process;

F. Orientation and support processes;

G. Performance evaluation.

III. LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGE

A. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government is responsible through such agencies as the EEO, for the strict enforcement of federal statutes and regulations relating to discrimination in employment opportunities. In addition, the federal courts may hear civil rights cases alleging unconstitutional discrimination in employment opportunities on the basis of sex. The United States Civil Rights Commission also has a significant role to play at the national level in monitoring civil rights practices and progress, including progress in the area of women's rights.

In addition to the federal monitoring and enforcement activities noted above, the U.S. Department of Education should promulgate and promote national goals for increasing the number of women in school administration. The department should also fund research projects relating to women in school administration and training grants designed to improve the preparation of women candidates for the principalship and to increase their visibility and chances for employment.

Unfortunately, it does not appear likely that the present national administration will be very vigorous in supporting such educational projects or in promoting equal opportunity for women in general. The 1985 fiscal year budget proposal does not portend well for the future since funding for the W.E.E.A.P. (Women's Educational Equity Act Program), within the Department of Education, has been eliminated.

B. STATE GOVERNMENTS

Since the primary legal and constitutional responsibility for the control and, increasingly, for the funding of public education is vested with the individual states--state governments and their appropriate agencies must play a significant leadership role in the struggle for sex equity in school administration.

Active and unqualified support should be extended by the individual governors, state legislatures, and chief state school officers. At this level, women's political action groups such as the National Organization for Women and The League of Women Voters may have an impact on state policy formation and in raising awareness

in the minds of key state policy makers. Local and state P.T.A. groups might also be helpful in addressing the problem at local and state levels.

In addition, state boards of education should be pressed to become much more active in recognizing the problem and in establishing firm policy guidelines for the support and implementation of statewide affirmative action plans for the public schools which should include, as a minimum, statewide goals for increased hiring of women administrators; research training and development projects; and monitoring and enforcement provisions.

Finally, state departments of education must play a visible and leading role in promoting sex equity within the public schools in each state. State departments might well begin with setting their own houses in order through providing exemplary models of affirmative action. State departments of education should promote many more women to top line administrative positions to serve as role models, advocates, and support sources for women school administrators throughout the states. At present, women are relegated in too many state departments to staff or low level line positions and a state's commitment to sex equity is highly suspect when the state education agency practices systematic discrimination against women career employees.

State departments of education should develop coherent, long-term, well-funded programs designed to enhance opportunities for women in educational administration. These programs should include careful statewide goal setting, recruitment programs, training and development projects in cooperation with local school districts and institutions of higher learning, statewide research, and effective monitoring and enforcement procedures. Again, women's political action groups and interested professional associations should be encouraged to promote such efforts within the various state departments of education.

C. **LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Local school boards, upon recommendation of local superintendents, appoint most of the public school administrators (including secondary principals) within the United

States. Clearly, genuine progress towards increasing opportunity for women to secure such appointments rests largely with local school boards and school district administration.

While legal appointment authority rests with the school boards, established practice, especially in larger school systems, vests the real appointment authority in the superintendent's office which "recommends" potential administrators to the board. In turn, actual practice has often left the selection or at least nomination of new administrators and, most particularly, of new secondary principals in the collective hands of the "good old boy network". The "good old boys" while not recognized on any formal organization chart, might best be described as a loosely organized informal fraternity of like-minded men who have benefited from the fraternal favors of the "boys" in the past and will stauchly support the unofficial but often effective blessing or veto of the group when considering new "members" for the future. A shared interest in athletics, poker, guns and other manly pursuits coupled with an anachroristic vision of the "little women" as most appropriately confined to the kitchen and bedroom too frequently characterizes the prevailing attitude of "the boys". And this group, in a multitude of forms, too often controls local school district administrative appointments. A first step in promoting sex equity at the local school level, then, may need to be reducing or modifying the power of this group to influence administrative appointments or, at the very least, to force the inclusion of some "good old girls" among the "good old boys" who serve as informal power brokers and opinion makers within the system.

A more satisfactory approach to this problem would be to address the entire administrative selection process in order to foster more objective criteria for the nomination and selection of potential administrators at the local district level. This approach should also include broadening input during the selection process by including administrators, teachers, parents, and, possibly, higher education representatives in the screening and evaluation of candidates. Making the selection process more visible, objective, and formal would undoubtedly result not only in the appointment of more women, but also in the appointment of better qualified men.

Women interested in administrative careers and men interested in reducing sex-based discrimination should enlist public and teacher support for the development of an effective and objective administrator selection process. This effort should be our number one priority.

There are, of course, many additional steps that progressive school districts could take to encourage the recruitment, selection, and retention of able and competent women into secondary school administration. These steps might include, but should not be limited to, the following:

(1). More women candidates should be supported for appointment or election to school board positions. School boards are notorious for their inclusion of a single "token" woman, and it is not coincidental that the sole woman is often assigned the task of taking notes as board secretary. One suspects that making or serving coffee to the male board members is not an infrequent additional assignment unless a school district secretary is available to perform such "woman's" work. Why not think the unthinkable--a woman school board president or finance committee chairman.

(2). Just as women appear to be largely missing from upper level line positions at the state department level, so they are about as frequent as blizzards in Acapulco in higher level local administrative positions. More qualified women should be appointed to superintendencies, assistant superintendencies and other major line positions in local school administrations. They could serve as role models, advocates, and support personnel for other women seeking or performing administrative responsibilities.

(3). Local school boards and school administrations should establish, circulate, monitor and enforce non-sexist hiring and promotion policies and should establish clear unequivocal goals for increasing the number and percentage of women in administrative positions over specified periods of time. These goals need not be stated as rigid quotas, nor encumbered with unnecessary beaureaucratic paperwork, but should be clear, honest, forthright, well-publicized and consistently supported in terms of practice.

(4). Support groups composed of other women and interested men should be formed

to provide guidance, support and advice to newly appointed women administrators who often feel isolated, ostracized and unappreciated.

(5). Outreach procedures should be adopted to identify, encourage and train potentially promising women candidates for administration. It is not sufficient to wait for women to apply for vacancies.

(6). Male administrators should be exposed to in-service training activities designed to reduce chauvinistic attitudes and practices.

(7). Administrative internship programs should be expanded and additional vice-principalships should be allocated in order to provide more "hands-on" training experiences for potential administrators, including women. Vice or assistant principalships should be redesigned to provide a wide spectrum of general administrative experience rather than just extended practice in paddle wielding.

(8). Detailed administrator evaluation procedures should be adopted which seek to measure administrative performance of men and women as objectively and fairly as possible. In short, much can and should be done at the local school district level to recruit, train, and retain competent women school administrators.

D. **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Professional associations also have a definite part to play in expanding the role of women in school administration. Women's political action groups have already been referred to, but it should also be noted that such large and potentially powerful professional groups as the NEA & AFT together with their state and local affiliates ought to be very active in women's issues since well over 50% of their members are women. These groups, perhaps in part due to their anti-administration posture, have been almost passive on these matters and should be viewed by women as untapped resources in the struggle for equality of opportunity.

National, state, and local associations of principals, school board members, and school administrators should be more active in promoting women for administrative positions. There is much, for example, that a national association of principals

like this one could do alone and in cooperation with other to advance the cause. That so little has been accomplished up to now is, perhaps, mute testimony to the power of the "good old boy network" that nurtured and rewarded most of us and that we are, therefore, so understandably reluctant to abandon. Ponder, however, what a planned and concerted effort on the part of a coalition of such groups as N.E.A., A.A.S.A., N.A.S.S.P., and the national school boards association could do to attack the problems cited above and to provide women with a national, state and local climate conducive to fulfilling their legitimate aspirations for advancement in the profession. Also, reflect on the benefits to America's children of considering women for leadership positions in our schools.

E. **HIGHER EDUCATION**

If other rooms in the educational edifice are in disarray, the room at the top is a total mess when it comes to promoting women's rights. Indeed, if women superintendents are as rare as snow in Acapulco, women professors of educational administration are about as frequent as floods in the Gobi Desert. And it will take more than the twisted metaphors of professional "good old boys" like the two of us to set things right in higher education.

Obviously, schools of education and, most especially, departments of educational administration bear a large share of responsibility for the present situation. Instead of providing women role models for aspiring female students, we have neglected to recruit qualified women faculty into many of our departments saying more by our deeds than by our words. While an occasional woman is recruited to teach reading or English methods courses, most schools of education remain essentially male preserves. This is especially true of educational administration. A high priority item for higher education then, is the appointment and advancement of qualified women aspirants within all the departments of schools and colleges of education. These appointments should, on a national basis include significant numbers of deans and assistant deans of schools of education and chairpersons of departments of

educational administration. The numbers and percentages of women faculty members in educational administration should be greatly increased and qualified women should be fairly represented in all academic ranks. Including full professor.

F. **WOMEN IN EDUCATION**

While each group mentioned above should share in the effort to pry open the doors of administrative opportunity in education, women themselves, individually and collectively, must be in the forefront of the struggle for equity. Women educators must be willing to do those things necessary to enhance their opportunities for advancement within the American educational hierarchy. The role of women's political action organizations such as the National Organization for Women has been mentioned in connection with political activity at the national, state, and local levels. The potential influence of women within large professional societies and associations has also been cited along with the role of women in developing support groups for themselves at the local level. It is time to review practical steps that can be taken by individual women to enhance their opportunities for an adminstrative appointment in education.

The following suggestions may provide some assistance to women who wish to improve their chances for advancement. This list, of course, does not exhaust all of the possibilities for self-enhancement:

-Make sure you have the necessary credentials to certify you as an administrator.

-Show interest and enthusiasm in volunteering to perform duties beyond normal classroom responsibilities.

-Be the best teacher you are capable of becoming. A new principal with a reputation as an outstanding teacher is more readily accepted as an instructional leader.

-Effective interpersonal skills are essential. Keep this in mind when working with students, peers, parents and the administration. Seek constant feedback on how you relate to others.

-Seek ways to improve your communication skills. Once again, stress feedback through two-way communication.

-Show interest, make specific suggestions, and be willing to experiment with curricular improvements. Begin with your own class. Be sure and keep base data in order to document your progress.

-Volunteer for system-wide responsibilities, e.g., textbook, inservice and curriculum committees.

-Let your principal know of your interest in administration and that you would appreciate the opportunity to work with him/her on administrative tasks.

-Contact key central office personnel to assist you. Let them know of your interest in administration. Keep them and your principal acquainted with your curricular innovations and broadening experimental base.

-Contact former professors and ask for their suggestions and recommendations. They can also keep you informed as to administrative vacancies that occur outside your school system.

-If there is a local principals' organization and they admit aspiring administrators, take advantage of this opportunity to expand your contacts. Also join either the NAESP or NASSP so that you can remain current on the latest educational developments.

-Be flexible and be willing to move outside your immediate geographical area. This will greatly broaden your opportunities.

-Believe in yourself and avoid too much modesty. If you don't "toot your own horn", diplomatically of course, it may not be "tooted".

-Familiarize yourself with state statutes, local board policies, and state minimum rules and regulations.

-If your system permits it, get to know school board members and, better yet, let them know you.

-Belong to professional organizations and assume leadership responsibilities as the opportunities occur. Don't be too active in teacher advocacy groups that could earn you a reputation as an educational troublemaker.

- Use in-service days and summers wisely to increase your knowledge of administration

and supervision. Attend conferences, seminars, and even try your hand at writing. You might also agree to conduct in-service seminars as a way of increasing your visibility.

-Seek varied teaching experiences at different levels and under different administrators.

Women who are serious about pursuing a career in school administration would also be well advised to ponder thoughtfully the advice offered by Kenneth Erickson and Nancy Fitner in an excellent article entitled "The Mentor Concept is Alive and Well", published in the December, 1980, N.A.S.S.P. Bulletin. The following is quoted from the concluding section of that article:

"While it is clear that the majority of administrative positions are held by men, women are actively seeking--and a few securing--line and staff positions in educational organizations. Women seeking such positions are advised:

-To gain experiences in working with diverse groups (peers, bosses, and subordinates):

-To build a network of contacts:

-To find an experienced administrator willing to act as a mentor:

-To puruse opportunities in which to demonstrate one's competencies:

and

-To clarify one's professional goals.

These are recommentations which are valuable to anyone--male or female--seeking and administrative position."

Perhaps through implementing some of the suggestions noted above, women can do much to improve their own status position within the field of education and can contribute in far greater numbers to the vital task of leading our nation's schools into an uncertain future.